**Book Reviews**

**Practical management of asthma, 2nd edition**

T. Clark and J. Rees  

This is a well-written, easy-to-follow book. The authors have packed much useful information into 164 very readable pages with illustrations. The text is divided into 11 chapters. The first three chapters are devoted to the diagnosis, natural history and precipitating factors of asthma. The next four chapters describe the management of asthma, including the latest British Thoracic Society consensus reports and recommendations for management guidelines, highlighting the problems in the management of children with asthma, and stress the importance of the GP in making the initial diagnosis of asthma and in dealing with the general management of asthmatic patients. Especially noteworthy are the chapters on methods of drug delivery, patient education and inflammation and allergy, including hyposensitization therapy. The chapter on physical and psychological treatments is an interesting suggestion for a different approach to the management of asthma.

As the authors outline in their preface, this book is not intended to be an exhaustive dissertation on the management of asthma, but rather to serve as a compact reference source for further reading. In any case, the strength of the book lies in its ability not only to synthesize the current status of the management of asthma, but also to provide a comprehensive list of references.

My opinion is that this useful text will be of assistance to all those looking after asthma patients. Therefore, it will prove of greatest benefit to clinicians, GP trainees, medical students and nurses, and I am sure that they will find it an indispensable addition to their libraries. Readers will also appreciate the reasonable cost of this book.

M. Cazzola

**Perinatal and pediatric respiratory care**

S. L. Barnhart and M. P. Czervinske  

*Perinatal and pediatric respiratory care* is meant to be a current reference for clinicians engaged in respiratory care of infants and children, as well as a basic textbook for respiratory care students and the experienced respiratory care practitioner. The book is also aimed at medical students, nurses and physicians.

The book covers paediatric respiratory care from prematurity throughout childhood. It covers topics from intensive care to family-centred health care. The first chapter very appropriately takes up emotional reactions in hospitalized infants and children with respiratory disorders, and the role of parents and siblings. A review of fetal lung development follows, suited to improve the understanding of respiratory disorders.

The next section of *Perinatal and pediatric respiratory care*, in six chapters, considers clinical assessment, examination and monitoring of infants and children with respiratory diseases. Clinical history is dealt with somewhat superficially, whereas clinical examination techniques are described thoroughly.

Different pulmonary function testing techniques in infants and children are described briefly, considering principles rather than practical measuring. Radiographic techniques are described briefly and superficially. As an example, bronchiectasis is not described. Important techniques such as computed tomography and magnetic resonance imaging are omitted. The chapter on bronchoscopy gives an excellent description of the technical procedure, but only mentions the theoretical background briefly. However, blood gas analysis and patient monitoring are described excellently.

Respiratory therapy is covered in 14 chapters. Oxygen therapy, humidity and aerosol therapy are described extensively. The importance of physical properties of inhaled drugs is not mentioned; in particular, how lipid-soluble drugs (e.g. inhaled steroids) and water-soluble drugs (e.g. inhaled β₂-agonists) put different demands upon nebulizing equipment. Lung expansion therapy, chest physical therapy and airway management are very well described, but the importance of physical activity and training procedures could be more underlined.

Mechanical ventilation and different ventilators for neonates and older children are described in detail, including patient monitoring during mechanical ventilation. Separate chapters take up continuous
positive airways pressure, high-frequency ventilation and extracorporeal life support.

Only one chapter is dedicated to pharmacology. This is very brief, and not up to European standards and tradition. The latest recommendation from the American Academy of Pediatrics on Ribavirin treatment is not included.

The last part of the book is dedicated to respiratory care of different respiratory and airways disorders. Included are neonatal disorders, airways disorders, pulmonary infections, congenital malformations and congenital cardiac defects, pleural disorders, sudden infant death and neurologic and neuromuscular disorders. Thoracic organ transplantation and respiratory care during transport and home care are mentioned in separate chapters. This part of the book is of high quality.

The book contains helpful illustrations and tables. Each chapter starts with a well-arranged table of contents.

In conclusion, *Perinatal and pediatric respiratory care* is a very useful textbook. In particular, the descriptions of practical procedures and techniques are of high quality. This alone is reason enough for buying the book. The theoretical background and, particularly, pharmacological therapy are described more superficially.

*Kai-Håkon Carlsen*